

# CHINA – “beyond the clouds”

A spectacular scenic tour to Sichuan & Yunnan in South West China

15 Day/13 night small group tour departing from London March 29<sup>th</sup> 2012

In the southwest corner of China Yunnan is a province so different and whose traditions are still alive

*Magnificent extraordinary climatic and scenic diversity makes this region a travel paradise yet to be discovered.*

**CHENGDU** – The capital of Sichuan province with its bamboo forests is the natural home of the Giant Panda.

**KUNMING:** The city of “Eternal Spring” and famous for the Karst formations of its Stone Forest

**DALI:** Ancient picturesque town and capital of the traditional Bai minority peoples

**LIJIANG:** is an UNESCO World Heritage protected town with well-preserved traditional buildings

**ZHONGDIAN** – Also known as SHANGRI-LA on the edge of the Tibetan plateau at 3200m above sea level.

*This tour is carefully planned so the traveller can enjoy the contrasts of scenery in this region in a relaxed way, free time to explore the local area, meet the local people in their traditional costumes and to select their own choice of meals when not included in the itinerary*

THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE CITY OF CHINA IS **SHANGHAI** WHICH WILL BE A TOTAL CONTRAST



## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1-(28 March) Our journey begins as we fly to SHANGHAI airport from London (regional flights available on application.)

DAY 2.(29 March) On arrival at Shanghai airport meet your local guide before being transferred to your superior hotel for 2 nights. There will be time to settle in and unwind after your journey. In the evening join your fellow travellers in one of our favourite restaurants for a welcome dinner / D

DAY 3 (30 March)After breakfast a full day sightseeing in Shanghai visit includes the Yu Yuan gardens, Shanghai old town. The Bund, Nanjing Road and Xintiandi area. Plus a visit to the Shanghai museum. After dinner enjoy an included acrobatic show. B/ D

DAY 4 (31 March) A leisurely breakfast and free time before transferring to Shanghai Pudong airport and the flight to CHENGDU (MU 5415- 12.10-15.20) on arrival transfer to your hotel for a stay of 2 nights. Dinner plus free time to explore the local area. B/ D ( L in flight)

DAY 5.(01 April)Today, we have a full morning visit to the Panda Breeding and Research centre and discover the breeding and preservation methods of the giant panda's. There will also be an opportunity to take photographs with the Pandas. A once in a lifetime experience. In the afternoon we return to Chengdu and discover the city with its narrow streets and busy market. In the evening an opportunity to appreciate the famous Sichuan Opera with the fantastic “changing faces” B / D

DAY 6. (02 April) We depart our hotel and transfer to the airport for our flight to KUNMING (MU 5870- 12:00-13.20) On arrival we transfer to the city In the afternoon sightseeing tour of the Western Hills, a range of four mountains along the shore of Di- anchi Lake. Then on to tour the 400 year old GoldenPalace temple at the top of Mingfeng Hill, home of the Taoist Taihe Palace and the largest copper temple in China. Overnight in our superior hotel for 2 nights B / D ( L in flight?)

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DAY 7.(03 April) A rare experience today ,we have a full day sightseeing visit to the fantastic Stone Forest at Shilin ,where you will marvel at the enthralling labyrinth of jagged limestone crags. The area is home to the Sani minority, known for their fine embroidery and dancing skills. and on the return to Kunming we make a stop at a local Sani people's village. Free evening & overnight in our hotel. B/ L ( D on own account)

DAY 8.(04 April) Depart by coach for a scenic drive along part of the famous “Burma Road” to DALI via Chuxiong DALI is one of the most charming and relaxing spots in China. It is a small unspoiled town with a dusty medieval atmosphere and traditional cobblestone streets and a beautiful setting, with mountains on one side of the town and Erhai Lake on the other. Two ancient city gates and parts of ancient walls still stand. Dali is the home of the Bai minority group. On arrival we transfer to Erhai Lake (one of the largest in-land lakes in China) for a leisurely cruise and enjoy its alpine setting. Visit Jin Sui Isle which is home to a Bai minority people's fishing village and market. Later in the afternoon return to the city and check-in the hotel for 2 nights Remainder of the day and evening free to explore fascinating Dali. B /L/D

DAY 9(05 April) After breakfast we make a visit to the famous 9th century Three Pagodas of Chongsheng temple and explore the wonders of the ancient quarter of Dali. We then start our drive through the countryside and make stops at Bai villages to see traditional houses and colourful markets etc. and the village of Xizhou to see traditional merchant's tea houses and enjoy a tea ceremony. Return to city and remainder of day at leisure. Overnight Dali. B /L ( D on own account)

DAY 10(06 April) Late morning departure for a train journey from Dali to LIJIANG (2 hours)passing by farmland and mountain scenery to 800 year old city of Lijiang. Arriving midday you transfer to hotel check in for a stay of 2 nights remainder of day time to explore Lijiang. B /D

DAY 11(07 April).After breakfast we travel outside of Lijiang to make a visit to Yak meadow of the Jade Dragon snow mountain where we will take a chair lift for fabulous views over the valley (we travel up to 4500m above sea level today) On return to Lijiang we visit a local village. Free evening to explore the ancient town of Lijiang, (a UNESCO world heritage site). and also enjoy a performance of ancient Naxi music overnight Lijiang.. B/L/ D on own account.

DAY 12(08 April). In the morning we take in a visit to Black Dragon pool park with its moon embracing pavilion, Five phoenix pavilion and Dongba cultural village .continue on we drive approx. 4 hours (with stops) to ZHONGDIAN(SHANGRI-LA). En- route we make a visit to the famous Tiger Leaping Gorge one of the deepest gorges in the world with spectacular views. We also see the "first bend" of the Yangste River at Shigu arriving in Zhongdian (3400 m. above sea level) in the late afternoon .The stunning picturesque setting believed to be inspiration of the mythical Shangri La described in James Hilton's novel "The Lost Horizon" we then check-in our hotel for 2 nights Free evening B /D plus packed L.

DAY 13( 09 April) Today, a leisurely tour of Zhongdian taking in the main sights and Sumtsentling Monastery. We also visit a Tibetan home and in the evening we have a local Tibetan dinner. B/L/D

DAY 14:.(10 April) Depart hotel (see note below) and transfer to the airport for return flight via Kunming back to Shanghai for 1 night. (MU 5811 09.55 – 15.05) Free evening to relax and/or enjoy Shanghai by night. B/ plus (L in flight) / D on own account.

DAY 15: (11 April) Transfer to the airport for your return flight. As you will be travelling westwards your arrival in London will be later the same day. / B

**\*\*NOTE:** If you have booked an extension tour to Sapa & Hanoi (Vietnam) or Guilin and Hong Kong you will depart on DAY 14 from KUNMING.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This tour includes areas of high altitude at the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in Lijiang of 4500m.and in Zhongdian at 3200m.This should not be a problem although everyone should take care. If you suffer from heart or respiratory conditions or have other concerns please consult your doctor.

### HOTELS:

CHENGDU :-Minshan Lhasa Hotel,

PS.: *IT'S MY HOME HERE !!*

KUNMING: -Grand Park Hotel or Kunming Hotel

DALI: - Landscape Hotel,

ZHONGDIAN: -Gyalthang Dzong Hotel,

LIJIANG:- Jiananchun Hotel

SHANGHAI: Greenland Juilong Hotel.



**COST:** £2195.00 per person

single supplement £295